

February 1998

Deadlines

Editor

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Letters to the Editor

Send Letters to <strauch@cofc.edu>, phone or fax 803-723-3536, or snail mail: **Against the Grain**, 209 Richardson Ave., MSC 98, The Citadel, Charleston, SC 29409. You can also send a letter to the editor from the **ATG Homepage** at <<http://www.against-the-grain.com>>

Dear Editor:

As a followup to the article **Bruce Heterick** and I wrote for **ATG** in 1996 ("The Year 2000 is Coming ... Are Your Data Coming With It?", v.8#3, June 1996, pp. 1, 17-19), I thought your readers might be interested in a couple of items regarding the Year 2000 problem that I ran across recently.

Last Fall I got to wondering what it would be like trying to get my money out of my bank if it (the bank) were not Year 2000 compliant. So I got on their Web Page and sent a message asking about this, subtly hinting that unless the bank could assuage my fears on this subject, I would close my accounts. (I live by the motto: "Never be the last one to try to withdraw your money from your bank because of the Year 2000 problem.")

To my amazement, I got not one but two telephone messages from the bank. To my recollection, this is the first time they have acknowledged my existence, unless you count overdrawn account notices. Even more amazing was the detailed explanation I got that, although the bank itself is compliant, not all its vendors are, and therefore they could not issue ATM cards with dates of 2000 and beyond (it was the "99" on my ATM cards that had gotten me all worked up in the first place). Last week they sent me a new ATM card — and it's dated "01." Whew.

The other item is the publication of Stephen Jay Gould's *Questioning the Millennium: a Rationalist's Guide to a Precisely Arbitrary Countdown*. This is a treatment of the millennium issues, written from a scientist's point of view. Gould doesn't much like computers, so there is not much on the Year 2000 problem. There were two highlights, however. The first is an explanation of how the debate over 2000 vs. 2001 as the first year of the new mil-

lennium got started. I had known that Dionysius Exiguus ("Dennis the Short"), the 6th century monk who devised the "B.C./A.D." business, had not included a year 0 in his calculations. Therefore, in order for the First Century to be 100 years long, it has to include the year 100, and the Second Century begins with January 1, 101. However, the thought "Why was D the E so stupid as to not include 0?" never occurred to me, the non-mathematician. The answer is a good one: in the 6th Century, no one, not even the Hindus, had yet invented it.

The other gem has to do with the spelling of "millennium," which Gould maintains has to have two N's because it is composed of "mille" ("One thousand") and "annus" ("year"). Spelled with one N, it would mean one thousand circles ("anus"="circle") or one thousand.....well, you get my drift.

Keep up the good work at **ATG**.

Sincerely yours,

David R. Fritsch

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Dear Editor:

Is a "rare bookseller" (**ATG**, November 1997, p. 72) different from a "rare book seller"?

Another great issue.

Warm good wishes,

Michael Gorman

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From your (spring cleaning in winter) Editor:

It has been COLD in Charleston this winter, but that didn't stop yours truly from cleaning. I don't want to give you the impression that I have a clean house, but for some reason I decided to clean it at least for a few weeks (part of the New Year and all that.) ... Anyway, cleaning got me to thinking about 1997 and all that has happened around us. In this **Annual Report** issue we give you a look at some of the trends and issues. **Dan Halloran** calls 1997 the year of the Web; to **Karen Hunter** it was the year of Metadata; to **John Secor** it was partnering and cooperation; to **Stephen Rhind-Tutt**, pricing models for electronic products; to **Jim Vickery**, mandatory deposit of electronic products; to **Judy Luther**, consolidations and mergers. But I think the most charming paper in this issue is by **Brian Cox** as he looks over forty years of the publishing industry. We were there for a lot of it ourselves.

This issue of **ATG** illustrates what will no doubt consume us for 1998. Buying and selling electronic — and even print — products, pricing of same, consolidations in the industry, archiving and preserving of the electronic record, the World Wide Web, consortial buying, distance education. Our interviews are with **Lana Porter** (Ameritech) and **K. Wayne Smith** (OCLC). And we have a couple of new things to report. First, **Jeffrey Wilhite** has agreed to take over editing the **International Dateline** section of **ATG**, which I hope will grow! And, **Bob Nardini** has been kind enough to supply us with a physics bestseller list. I hope that you other booksellers out there will make other contributions in this bestseller list area. In fact, is there anyone out there who wants to make it his or her business to make sure that this happens regularly?

Well, excuse me. My daughter says I left the vacuum cleaner running.

Yr. Ed. 

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Event	Issue	Camera-Ready Copy
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ALA Annual	June 98	5/6/98
Reference Books	September 98	7/8/98
Charleston Conference	November 98	9/16/98
ALA Midwinter	December 98/January 99	11/18/98

